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ABSTRACT

Since the spring semester of 1969, Kansas State University faculty have used the Student Evaluation of Instruction and Courses program known today as IDEA--Instructional Development and Effectiveness Assessment. Voluntary participation in the system has grown from less than 80 classes in 1969-1970 to more than 1,600 classes per year in recent years; approximately 750 different faculty members participated over a recent three-semester period. The purpose of this study was to gain "consumer" reactions from faculty who have used the Office of Educational Improvement and Innovation to improve their instructional effectiveness. A structured interview was conducted with 93 randomly selected faculty members who had used the system during 1976. The descriptive statistics revealed that the sample included a good cross-section of the KSU faculty who use the system. Their responses are reported regarding overall reactions to the system, recommendations about frequency of evaluation, student conscientiousness, and using the results for instructional improvement. Statistics and commentary are included in this study on the interview method, the relationship between submission of results and salary or tenure decisions, evaluation procedures, and uses and effectiveness of the IDEA system. A descriptive letter to the faculty, interview guide, interview form, and survey form are appended. (LBH)

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Research Report #44

FACULTY REACTION TO THE KSU STUDENT EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION PROGRAM

Richard E. Owens and Victoria L. Clegg

September 1977

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Since the Spring semester of 1969, Kansas State University faculty have used the Student Evaluation of Instruction and Courses program, known today as IDEA -- Instructional Development and Effectiveness Assessment. (See Appendix for a copy of the form.) Voluntary participation in this system has grown from less than 80 classes in 1969-70 to more than 1,600 classes per year in recent years; approximately 750 different faculty members participated over a recent three semester period.

The Office of Educational Improvement and Innovation was established in 1970 to assist faculty members in improving their instructional effectiveness. Since that time, all administrative responsibility for the evaluation system has been handled by this office; interpretive help, consultation and assistance with instructional development have been provided upon request.

Through informal feedback from participants, information about other systems and institutions and new research findings, a variety of revisions have been made in the system. However, no attempt has been made to obtain the views of a representative group of users as to these specific changes or the program as a whole. The purpose of this investigation was to gain this type of "consumer" reactions.

Procedures

A structured interview was conducted with 93 randomly selected faculty members who had used the system during the Spring and/or Fall semesters of 1976.[1] Each participant received a letter of explanation along with an outline of the interview questions. Samples of these materials can be found in the Appendix. The interviews were conducted by four individuals; interviewer training and supervision was provided by the authors.[2] All interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the faculty members; they ranged from 30 minutes to 2 hours, with an average time of approximately one hour.

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[1]A sample of 100 faculty members was originally drawn. For a variety of reasons, six were unable to participate. Only one individual expressly declined to be interviewed.

[2]Special recognition is due Dr. Ellen Bowers, Diann Dees, Jeffrey Reed and Ronald Spangler for their able assistance on the project.

Results

The Sample

The descriptive statistics revealed that the sample included a good cross-section of the KSU faculty who use the system. The sample was categorized according to college, academic discipline, rank and tenure status. Tables 1 and 2 show that all groups within each of these categories were well represented.

Table 3 describes the size and "motivation" characteristics of the 221 classes evaluated by the 93 respondents. "Motivation" was inferred from the average class response to the question, "I had a strong desire to take this course". These distributions closely parallel those for all classes evaluated during the same two semesters. Further, all course levels were represented (Lower Division, Upper Division, and Graduate); lecture, discussion and laboratory courses were predominant, but studio and seminar classes were reported by several members of the sample.

Faculty respondents were classified according to the predominant size and motivation level of the courses they evaluated in 1976. Collapsed groupings were used because of the small number of cases. Table 4 shows considerable diversity among the respondents in terms of the types of teaching situations they encountered.

The amount of experience which respondents had with the evaluation system was indicated by the number of semesters each instructor had used the form. Results are shown in Table 5; about half had used it 2 semesters or less.

Table 6 summarizes the overall evaluation results for respondents. The upper half of the table gives results on student progress ratings while mean ratings for item 37 ("I would like to take another course from this instructor") are given in the lower half.[3] Both ratings have been compared with those obtained for all courses of similar size and level of motivation.

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[3]T-scores were used to calculate the mean ratings for each instructor. The T-scores for all courses evaluated by that instructor during the Fall and Spring semesters of 1976, were averaged. The resulting mean for each instructor was then categorized according to the following scheme:

Below Average	<44.5
Average	44.5-54.4 ($\pm\frac{1}{2}$ SD from 50.0)
Above Average	>54.4

TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF SAMPLE WITH TOTAL POPULATION USING THE EVALUATION SYSTEM DURING 1976

COLLEGE	TOTAL POPULATION NUMBER	TOTAL POPULATION PERCENT	SAMPLE NUMBER	SAMPLE PERCENT
Agriculture	58	8.8	3	8.6
Architecture & Design	56	8.4	7	7.5
Arts and Sciences	297	44.8	37	39.8
Business Administration	50	7.5	7	7.5
Education	74	11.2	12	12.9
Engineering	52	7.8	10	10.8
Home Economics	61	9.2	9	9.7
Veterinary Medicine	15	2.3	3	3.2
Total	663	100.0	93	100.0

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE AS TO ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE, RANK AND TENURE STATUS

ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE	NUMBER	PERCENT
Humanities	28	30.1
Social/Behavioral Sciences	29	31.2
Natural/Mathematical Sciences	36	38.7
Total	93	100.0
RANK		
Associate/Full Professors	32	34.4
Assistant Professors	34	36.6
Instructors/GTA/Other	27	29.0
Total	93	100.0
TENURE STATUS		
Tenured	39	41.9
Earning Tenure	25	26.9
Non-Tenure Track*	29	31.2
Total	93	100.0

*Individuals on temporary appointments

TABLE 3

DISTRIBUTION OF CLASSES BY SIZE AND MOTIVATION

SIZE	NUMBER	PERCENT
Small (0-14)	46	20.8
Medium (15-34)	107	48.4
Large (35-99)	55	24.9
Extra Large (>99)	13	5.9
Total	221	100.0
MOTIVATION*		
Low (<3.0)	36	16.3
Low Average (3.0-3.4)	43	19.5
Average (3.5-3.9)	69	31.2
High Average (4.0-4.4)	50	22.6
High (>4.4)	23	10.4
Total	221	100.0

*Class motivation is based on the average response to item 36, "I had a strong desire to take this course."

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION BY SIZE AND CLASS MOTIVATION

	MOTIVATION							
SIZE	LOW & LOW AVERAGE		AVERAGE		HI AVE. & HIGH		TOTAL	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Small & Medium	17	18.3	19	20.4	23	24.7	59	63.4
Large & Extra Large	12	12.9	14	15.1	8	8.6	34	36.6
Total	29	31.2	33	35.5	31	33.3	93	100.0

TABLE 5

EXPERIENCE WITH THE EVALUATION SYSTEM

NUMBER OF SEMESTERS	NUMBER	PERCENT
1 - 2	46	49.5
3 - 5	24	25.8
6+	23	24.7
Total	93	100.0

TABLE 6

DISTRIBUTION OF OUTCOMES ON THE EVALUATION

PROGRESS ON RELEVANT OBJECTIVES	NUMBER	PERCENT
Below Average	5	5.4
Average	44	47.3
Above Average	44	47.3
Total	93	100.0
WOULD LIKE INSTRUCTOR AGAIN		
Below Average	17	18.3
Average	42	45.2
Above Average	34	36.5
Total	93	100.0

Comparability Among Interviewers

Concern that variance in the data might be due to interviewer differences prompted Chi-square tests of significance (α=.05) on all interview variables, demographic data and the frequency of "no response" codings. Only one of the 30 tests was significant; apparently, potential interviewer differences were not an important source of variation.

Analyses

Frequency counts were compiled for all interview questions as well as for demographic data. Chi-square comparisons on 21 interview questions were made among groups defined by academic discipline, rank, tenure status, experience with the evaluation system, mean Progress Ratings on Relevant Objectives, mean ratings on item 37, predominant class size and level of motivation.

Procedures for Participating in the Evaluation Program

Over the years procedures have been developed which allow the Office of Educational Improvement to serve large numbers of faculty efficiently. However, since the clerical routines necessary for efficient operation often appear otherwise to the user, respondents were asked to comment on specific materials and the procedures for participating. Eighty-two percent of the responses were positive in nature, 3% were negative and 15% were essentially neutral reactions.

The directions for administration state that "It will be your responsibility to arrange for proper administration of the forms. It is essential that you do not remain in the room after the instructions have been given. We suggest that you either (1) appoint a student or a GTA to take charge after you have given the instructions and have distributed the materials or (2) appoint a member of the class or a GTA as the administrator". Forty-one percent of the respondents indicated that they appointed a student in class; 33% shared the administration with someone else; 13% asked a GTA or clerk to act as administrator; and 13% handled the entire process themselves. Ninety-four percent indicated that they found the instructions for administering the materials clear.

Seventy-one percent of the respondents reported that they were able to categorize their own teaching goals by using the 10 objectives provided on the Faculty Information Form. No statistically significant differences were found among the subgroups defined by discipline, rank, tenure status, experience with the system, overall evaluation results, or size-motivation category of courses.

The Survey Form

With an open invitation to be critical of any item on the survey form, 44 participants indicated there were items they could criticize. Significant differences were found on two subgroup comparisons. Approximately 70% of respondents in the Humanities and 50% of those in the

Natural/Mathematical Sciences questioned the value of at least one item, while less than one-fourth of the Social/Behavioral Science group reported any concerns. All five of those who ranked below average on Progress of Relevant Objectives identified questionable items, while only 47% of those ranking average and above average did so.

Of the 44 participants who were critical, nine did not specify particular items while 7 felt the entire form was simply not appropriate for their teaching situations. Of those who specified items, nine took exception to only one item, ten noted either 2 or 3 items, seven noted 4 to 6 items, one listed 10 items and one objected to the entire teaching methods section.

There was very little mention of the Course and Self-rating items. Relatively little concern was expressed over the 10 items identifying objectives. Only four were mentioned by more than one person: *Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual-cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.)* (4 respondents); *Developing creative capacities.* (3 respondents); *Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing.* (3 respondents); *Discovering the implications of the course material for understanding myself (interests, talents, values, etc.)* (2 respondents).

Most of the items which were questioned described teaching procedures. The three items dealing with examinations provoked the most concern: *Gave examination questions which were unclear.* (7 respondents); *Gave examinations which stressed unnecessary memorization.* (8 respondents); *Gave examination questions which were unreasonably detailed (picky).* (10 respondents). Five or six instructors questioned the value or relevance of three items concerned with "Involving Students": *Promoted teacher-student discussion (as opposed to mere responses to questions).; Found ways to help students answer their own questions.; Encouraged student comments even when they turned out to be incorrect or irrelevant.* The only other item mentioned by as many as five people was, *Related course material to real life situations.* However, every teaching method item was viewed as questionable by at least one individual.

Using Additional Questions

Faculty members have been encouraged to individualize the evaluation by supplementing the standardized portion of the form with additional questions of their own or those chosen from a pool of suggested items. Forty-two percent of the respondents indicated that they did ask additional questions. No significant differences were found among any of the sub-groups.

The IDEA Report

Both statistical data and descriptive terms are used by the IDEA Report to help users interpret their ratings. Few (5%) of the respondents

reported using only the statistical data; while 34% used only the descriptive information. The majority (61%) relied upon both to aid interpretation. No significant differences were found among the various subgroups.

Seventy-four of the respondents said that they paid particular attention to the progress ratings on those objectives which they had specified as "essential" or "important" for the course. Again, there were no significant differences among subgroups.

Respondents were asked which sections of the Report were especially useful. *Part IV, Methods*, was identified by 40%; while 26% chose *Part I, Evaluation (Progress Ratings)*. Other parts of the report were mentioned less frequently: *Part III, Students' Self Ratings* - 13%; *Part VII, Summary Profile* - 12%; *Part II, Course Description* - 10%; and *Part VI, Diagnostic Summary* - 2%. Only a few identified any section of the report as "difficult to interpret"; 13% indicated Part VII; 6% mentioned Part IV; 4% Part VI; and 2% Part I.

The Interpretive Guide

Due to the complexities of the IDEA system, the report is relatively involved; hence, the Interpretive Guide is considered important to the full understanding of the information presented. To determine how extensively the guide was used, participants were asked if they had read the Interpretive Guide thoroughly. About two-thirds (69%) said they had. There were significant differences among those who obtained different ratings on Progress on Relevant Objectives (Table 7). The Interpretive Guide was read by a greater proportion of those who ranked above or below average than of those in the average group. In general, respondents indicated that the guide was helpful in understanding the meaning of the Report; several mentioned the "Professor Doe" illustrations. Some readers noted that a thorough reading of the Guide was time-consuming and that they had difficulty locating specific information quickly. The most frequent reasons given for not reading the Guide thoroughly were: (1) It takes too much time, (2) One can interpret as much as needed from the Report itself, and (3) The narrative is too technical and difficult to read.

TABLE 7

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE USE OF THE INTERPRETIVE GUIDE AND PROGRESS ON RELEVANT OBJECTIVES

	READ INTERPRETIVE GUIDE			
PROGRESS RATING	YES	ROW %	NO	ROW %
Below Average	5	100.0	0	0.0
Average	22	52.4	20	47.6
Above Average	35	79.5	9	20.5
Total	62	68.1	29	31.9

$\chi^2 = 9.778$, d.f.=2 $p < .001$

Reactions to Results

One concern often expressed about the use of student feedback instruments is that they cause needless anxiety among individuals anticipating a report. When asked how they would describe their own reactions to reviewing their evaluation results, 56% indicated a positive feeling, 13% a negative feeling, 19% a mixed feeling, and 12% appeared unconcerned. There were no significant differences among subgroups.

When asked if they could suggest other ways of providing results to individuals which might be more effective than present procedures, only 28% made suggestions. These included: provide comparisons within departments or colleges; include narrative comments in the profile; include standard deviations; delete the statistics for "Not Applicable" objectives; simplify the report; provide better opportunities for student comments; provide some student demographics; make the report more personal; suggest methods to improve the "weaknesses".

Recommendations About Frequency of Evaluation

Faculty members were asked how often they felt it would be desirable to obtain student ratings. Half of the responses were "every semester". Eighteen percent said "once a year", while 2% said "when a new approach is taken"; 23% responded with some combination of these. Again, no significant differences were found among the various subgroups.

Several who designated every semester as the ideal evaluation timetable indicated that constant student feedback was valuable for continued instructional improvement. Some who preferred once a year felt that more frequent feedback was often redundant.

Student Conscientiousness

Sixty percent of those responding gave an unqualified "Yes" when asked if they felt that most students give careful and thoughtful answers. Seventeen percent were clearly skeptical of the students' conscientiousness. Twenty-three percent gave an intermediate response, feeling that some students give thoughtful responses but some do not. No significant differences were found among the subgroups.

Respondents were also asked what they had done to encourage a conscientious attitude on the part of the students. The most frequently reported method was to express their desire to improve teaching and stress the need for student input in doing so. Others simply asked students to give careful consideration to answers and comments.

Using Results for Improvement

Ideally, the faculty member should be able to use the IDEA assessment to improve courses and/or teaching techniques. Eighty-seven percent of

the sample indicated they had used evaluation results for this purpose. Sixty-four individuals said they had changed their methods or techniques as a consequence of student descriptions of their teaching methods. Seven made changes in the content of a course. Nine instructors read the free student comments for suggestions, seven used ratings from Progress on Relevant Objectives for ideas about changes, and four sought advice from the Office of Educational Resources. Sixteen reported that student ratings reinforced the use of present methods or affirmed what the instructor already suspected concerning necessary changes.

When asked whether the Office of Educational Resources might be able to assist in improvement efforts, 18% said no and 22% did not respond directly to the question. Twenty-one of the 56 responding "Yes" indicated that individual consultation was the best way to assist. In addition, at least five people mentioned each of the following: workshops or seminars; video-taping of instructors; publications such as *Teaching Notes*; the course, Principles of College Teaching; provide help in preparing exams; visit classrooms; continue work with GTA's; do follow-up reviews of evaluations to show trends; provide more student demographics. Seven suggested some minor change in the evaluation form to better meet their individual needs.

Use of Evaluation Results for Improvement and Other Purposes

Since the evaluation system was specifically designed to provide information for self-improvement of instruction, several questions were posed about the use of evaluation results as input for administrative decisions on tenure and salary. When asked if they had ever submitted evaluation results for such administrative purposes, 69% answered in the affirmative. Faculty with ranks of Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor were more likely to submit results than were Instructors, GTA's or other temporarily assigned faculty. (Table 8). Significant differences were also found when the sample was classified according to tenure status. (Table 9). Not surprisingly, more faculty who were working toward tenure reported submitting their evaluations for administrative review than did tenured faculty; both of these groups were more likely to submit results than were those on temporary appointments.

As might be expected, significantly more of those who ranked above average on Progress on Relevant Objectives submitted evaluation results as input for administrative decisions than did those with lower ratings. (Table 10). Finally, those with the most experience were most likely to submit their results to administrators. (Table 11).

Some KSU departments have established policies requiring faculty members to submit the IDEA results as evidence of teaching ability; others require some evidence of teaching ability with the IDEA Report being one possibility; still others have no departmental policy on this matter. Of the respondents who submitted their reports, 53% indicated they did so voluntarily; 47% did so because of departmental policy. No significant differences were found among any of the subgroups.

TABLE 8

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUBMISSION OF RESULTS AS INPUT FOR TENURE OR SALARY DECISIONS AND RANK

	SUBMISSION OF RESULTS			
RANK	YES	ROW %	NO	ROW %
Associate/Full Professors	25	78.1	7	21.9
Assistant Professors	26	76.5	8	23.5
Instructors/GTA's/Others	13	48.1	14	51.9
Total	64	68.8	29	31.2

x^2=7.595, d.f.=2, p<.02

TABLE 9

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUBMISSION OF RESULTS AS INPUT FOR TENURE OR SALARY DECISIONS AND TENURE STATUS

	SUBMISSION OF RESULTS			
TENURE STATUS	YES	ROW %	NO	ROW %
Tenured	30	76.9	9	23.1
Earning Tenure	22	88.0	3	12.0
Non-Tenure Track	12	41.4	17	58.6
Total	64	68.8	29	31.2

x^2 =15.655, d.f.=2, p<.001

TABLE 10

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUBMISSION OF RESULTS AS INPUT
FOR TENURE OR SALARY DECISIONS AND
PROGRESS ON RELEVANT OBJECTIVES

	SUBMISSION OF RESULTS			
PROGRESS RATING	YES	ROW %	NO	ROW %
Below Average	3	60.0	2	40.0
Average	24	55.8	19	44.2
Above Average	36	81.8	8	18.2
Total	63	68.5	29	31.5

χ^2=6.989, d.f.=2, p<.03

TABLE 11

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUBMISSION OF RESULTS AS INPUT
FOR TENURE OR SALARY DECISIONS AND FREQUENCY
OF USING THE EVALUATION SYSTEM

	SUBMISSION OF RESULTS			
NUMBER OF SEMESTERS USED	YES	ROW %	NO	ROW %
1 - 2	26	56.5	20	43.5
3 - 5	18	75.0	6	25.0
6+	20	87.0	3	13.0
Total	64	68.8	29	31.2

χ^2=7.195, d.f.=2, p<.03

The Interpretive Guide suggests that if an instructor desires to submit information from evaluation results for administrative purposes, only the Summary Profile should be used since it is comprehensive and easily understood. However, 94% of those who submitted their Reports included the entire form. Thirty-four percent of these supplemented the Report with narrative explanations.

Perhaps the most vital issue here is how the faculty feel about using the evaluation results for dual purposes. Responses fell into three general categories: "Yes" (40%), a "Qualified Yes" (28%), and "No" (32%). Most of those who gave a qualified answer indicated the definite value of the results for the administrative use with the provisos that they be used judiciously, that they be supplemented with other data and that differences in teaching assignments be considered.

Some of the reasons given for not using the evaluation for both purposes were:

1. Administrators may not give the time and effort necessary to interpret the information properly.
2. Faculty may manipulate student responses by grading practices and efforts to be popular.
3. This dual use is a betrayal to faculty since the system was originally established for improvement purposes only.
4. Students may respond differently depending upon the reason for evaluating.
5. One's future should not be determined by the reactions of immature freshmen.
6. The report is too complicated for administrative use.
7. There is a conflict in purpose between use for self-improvement and use for administrative decisions.
8. The form was not designed to evaluate for administrative purposes.
9. If it is to be used for administrative decisions, all faculty should use it; voluntary use is appropriate for improvement.
10. Administrative use may encourage evaluation in only the teacher's best courses; for improvement, the worst courses would be most helpful to evaluate.

Surprisingly, there were no significant differences among subgroups as to the appropriateness of multiple uses, even though several groups clearly differed in terms of the actual use for administrative decisions.

Improving Instruction

The final question on the survey was, "Do you have any practical suggestions about the best ways to stimulate better teaching on this campus?" Sixty-seven of the 93 faculty members offered suggestions. Over a third of the respondents suggested better rewards for good teaching. Thirteen suggested seminars and/or workshops, especially for new teachers and GTA's. Seven thought faculty members should be given more encouragement to use the evaluation system. Other suggestions given by more than one person were: recruit better teachers; reward and nurture outstanding teachers; personalize teaching assignments; establish more resource help, such as audio-visual centers; institute smaller classes; improve physical facilities; help faculty develop/adapt to new assignments; publish more *Teaching Notes*; encourage more research on teaching; provide for more contact between new teachers and experienced teachers; and encourage more classroom visitation by department heads.

Discussion

The interview method was chosen because it permitted a flexible and in-depth study of faculty reactions and attitudes. Realizing that the presence of an interviewer who is closely associated with the IDEA system might discourage candid responses, the authors personally conducted interviews only on the rare occasion when none of the trained interviewers was available. The time required for the interview limited the sample size to only 100, approximately 15 percent of those who used the IDEA system during the Spring or Fall semesters of 1976. However, evidence was found which indicated that the sample was a good cross-section of the larger population. Faculty who were contacted were very willing to participate; only one member of the sample declined to be interviewed. Potential interviewer bias, another hazard of this approach, appeared to be inconsequential.

One finding of major interest was the homogeneity of faculty response across the various subgroups which were examined. Very few significant differences were found when the sample was categorized according to academic discipline, rank, tenure status, amount of experience with the evaluation system, overall evaluation ratings, predominant class size, or level of student motivation. Of course, there was not total agreement among groups on each question, but the amount of variance which could be attributed to these variables was surprisingly slight.

Re: Evaluation Procedures

On the whole, the procedures for participating in the program were viewed as quite satisfactory. As expected, several complaints offset each other; for example, one faculty member objected to the invitation letter being sent "so early" while another complained that it arrived "too late". However, other comments proved more useful. On the basis of some criticism that the evaluation Report is often returned before grades are assigned, faculty members are now provided the option of requesting that the Report be mailed to them after semester grades have been submitted.

Re: The List of Objectives

Seven out of ten participants reported being able to categorize their own teaching goals by using the ten objectives provided on the Faculty Information Form. Since the IDEA system depends heavily on this information, the finding was especially reassuring.

Of those who indicated having difficulty, several acknowledged that the problem was their inexperience in identifying objectives; some reported difficulty in rating the relative importance of objectives. Others were troubled because one or more of the objectives were not applicable to their teaching situations. Some faculty members may not be aware that an objective which has been rated as "Of no more than minor importance" is treated as "Not applicable" in the Report; only the mean and frequency distribution are reported.

The objectives were written to be general, comprehensive descriptions of the purposes for university courses. Undoubtedly, this contributed to several objections that they are "vague" or "too abstract". Even so, a few instructors, especially those teaching "studio" courses, indicated difficulty in finding objectives which "really fit" their teaching situations. Clearly, additional attention should be given to resolving this problem.

Re: Instructional Methods

Most criticisms of the Survey Form dealt with those items which describe instructional methods and procedures. This is not surprising; student ratings on these items are directed specifically toward the instructor's classroom performance and many faculty members specified "Part IV, Methods" as an especially useful section of the evaluation Report.

Faculty members in the Humanities were the most likely to question the relevance of items, while those in the Natural/Mathematical Sciences were evenly split in their reactions. Social/Behavioral Scientists voiced little concern. This trend can be at least partially explained by considering the types of courses taught in each discipline. Courses in the performing or creative arts or in laboratories may well require instructional methods and procedures not addressed by the traditional items which dominate the current form.

In anticipation of this problem, the system permits participants to ask as many as 20 additional questions. This option is offered for the explicit purpose of helping the instructor "tailor" the evaluation form to specific teaching situations. The finding that close to half of faculty users asked additional questions was a pleasant surprise. Earlier studies had shown that less than 10 percent requested that students answer supplemental items on the standard answer card. Obviously, many users have found it more convenient to request "additional" student feedback separately from the option provided by the system.

By far the greatest criticism was made of the three items on examinations. This confirmed previously unsolicited feedback from faculty who were skeptical about the value of these items. Work is now underway to construct replacements or revisions.

Re: The IDEA Report

There were mixed results in the way faculty used the Report. Over two-thirds indicated that they had read the Interpretive Guide thoroughly, a majority used both the statistical data and descriptive information when interpreting their results, and most reported paying particular attention to those objectives which they rated as "essential" or "important". However, when asked to specify sections of the Report which were especially useful, only two percent mentioned the Diagnostic Summary. This section is the most unique and sophisticated part of the system. It integrates data regarding the "important" and "essential" objectives, student progress ratings, and descriptions of teaching methods. Faculty members rarely reported taking advantage of the diagnostic potential of the system, basing their improvement efforts more often upon a low rating for a given teaching method regardless of whether or not it was related to student progress on the instructor's objectives. Thus, subsequent student ratings on that particular item may improve, without necessarily improving instructional effectiveness as measured by student progress. Clearly, faculty users need additional assistance in making optimal use of the Report.

Faculty members ranking either in the lowest or highest group on Progress on Relevant Objectives read the Interpretive Guide more often than those with average rankings. One plausible explanation is that low ratings motivate participants to examine their results in detail, while instructors with high ratings are already notably motivated in their teaching and capitalize on every opportunity to improve.

Re: The Psychology of Participation

Contrary to the expectations of some, over half of the respondents reported "positive" reactions to reviewing their evaluation results; only 13 percent approached them with entirely "negative" feelings (fear, apprehension, resentment, etc.). Faculty comments did indicate that their reactions were somewhat related to prior evaluation results; however, there were no significant differences among subgroups categorized by overall effectiveness ratings. Thus, only a few faculty participants viewed the evaluation process as a threat. This may reflect the length of time the program has been in effect as well as the fact that non-users were not interviewed.

Re: Frequency

One of the most surprising findings of this study was that half of those interviewed thought it would be desirable to obtain student ratings "every semester". This response was not related to whether or not an instructor submitted results for administrative use. While some fear

that frequent use will result in careless student reporting, only 17 percent were definitely skeptical of student conscientiousness in completing the survey forms. This is consistent with students' own assessments; less than 2 percent claim they do not give "thoughtful consideration to the questions" (item #39 on the Survey Form). It appears that most faculty members felt the value gained from frequent feedback outweighed the problems of "over-exposure".

Re: Multiple Uses

Faculty have been concerned, and rightfully so, about the multiple use of evaluation results. About two-thirds of KSU faculty who use the IDEA system reported submitting results as input for tenure and salary decisions. Of these, just over half did so voluntarily; the rest were following an established departmental policy. Those with the most experience with the IDEA system were more likely to submit results for administrative use than relatively inexperienced users.

Even at KSU where the student rating system has been used for several years, a sizeable portion of the faculty (32 percent) felt that the evaluation results should not be submitted for administrative decisions. This confirms the finding of an earlier study in which 31 percent of the faculty were critical of the use of student ratings in merit evaluations (Bennett and Griffitt, Survey of Faculty Opinion at Kansas State University, Research Report #35, Kansas State University, February, 1976).

A dilemma arises for two reasons. First, the literature in the field has consistently reported that student ratings are influenced by purpose; students tend to be more lenient if they think salary increases or promotion are at stake than if a less threatening rationale is given (e.g., improvement, research). Second, improvement of an institution's instructional program requires a special emphasis on weaknesses, an emphasis which would clearly penalize those whose results were used for administrative purposes as well.

There is no ideal solution to the problem. Essentially, current policy leaves the matter in the hands of the faculty member (or of the department, collectively). While no other policy seems as defensible, it is important that steps be taken to reduce abuses and misinterpretations. Further efforts should be made to assist administrators with the interpretation process. Departmental policies should be reviewed to ensure that innovative and experimental approaches to instruction are not unduly discouraged.

Re: Improvement of Instruction

Other studies have consistently found that faculty who use the system do improve in instructional effectiveness (Hoyt and Howard, The Evaluation of Faculty Development Programs, Research Report #39, Kansas State University, May, 1977). Results from the present investigation help explain this finding. Most faculty members (90%) reported using their evaluation results to aid in improving courses and/or teaching techniques. They directed their efforts in a variety of ways: several

acknowledged the reinforcement value of student ratings and comments; many noted the benefit of individual consultation with someone in the Office of Educational Improvement; a number used the Report to identify apparent weaknesses and made conscious efforts to overcome these. Apparently, the IDEA system is indeed an effective aid in faculty efforts to improve instruction.

Many suggestions were given for stimulating better teaching at KSU. The majority of these dealt with administrative provisions for facilitating the teaching process; a strong emphasis was placed on recognizing and rewarding excellence in teaching.

APPENDIX

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of Educational Resources
215 Fairchild Hall
Manhattan, Kansas 66506
Phone: 913 532 5712

April 15, 1977

A primary effort of the Office of Educational Improvement is to help faculty members improve instructional skills and effectiveness. One means of accomplishing this has been to provide faculty with the opportunity to receive systematic student feedback on courses and instructional procedures via the Student Evaluation of Instruction Program.

As you are a user of this system, we are especially interested in your reactions to the instrument itself, our administrative procedures, the computer report and the interpretive guide. We would also like to know how faculty members feel about the multiple purposes for which evaluation results are now being used since the instrument was specifically designed to provide information for self-improvement of instruction.

Your name is among a sample of 100 faculty drawn from all colleges. You will be contacted by telephone in the next few days to schedule a convenient time for a brief (30-40 minute) meeting with one of our staff. Enclosed is an Interview Guide which indicates the issues we would like to discuss with you.

I hope you can find the time to assist us with this project. The evaluation system has been designed to help faculty and we will need faculty insight and reaction in order to devise improvements which meet your needs.

Sincerely,

Dick Owens

Dick Owens

Enclosure

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What are your reactions to the procedures for participating in the Student Evaluation of Instruction Program?
   - -Invitation letter and card
   - -Instructions for participating
   - -Additional question brochure
   - -Means of getting materials back and forth
   - -Speed with which report is returned
2. What arrangements do you make for the classroom administration of the student forms? Are the instructions for administering clear?
3. What comments or questions do you have about the Faculty Information Form? The Student Survey Form? The Computer Form?
4. Ideally, how often do you feel it would be desirable to obtain student ratings (every semester, once a year, whenever a new approach is tried, etc.)? Explain.
5. Do you feel that most students give careful and thoughtful answers, or not? What have your observed that leads you to that conclusion? What have you done to encourage a conscientious attitude on the students' part?
6. Have you read the Interpretive Guide thoroughly? If not, why not? If so, have you had any specific problems using it? How has the guide been helpful (if at all)?
7. How have you used the results of your evaluations to aid in improving your courses and/or teaching techniques? Is there any way that you think the Office of Educational Improvement might be able to assist in those efforts?
8. Some faculty review their computer reports with considerable apprehension; some are relatively unconcerned: others are eager to learn how their students view them. How would you describe the reactions you have as your review the results? Can you suggest other ways of providing results to individuals which might be more effective?
9. This evaluation process was specifically designed to provide information for self-improvement of instruction. How do you feel about the other purposes for which evaluation results are now being used (input for tenure and salary decisions, teaching award selections, SGA publication)?
10. Do you have any practical suggestions about the best ways to stimulate better teaching on this campus?

THE INTERVIEW FORM

The actual Interview Form used with the participants included the ten questions as distributed in the Interview Guide (previous page) with the following additions:

1. Identification information on the course type.

2. Elaboration on the items in question 3 as follows:

   FIF: A. Are you able to categorize your own teaching goals under the 10 objectives provided? Suggestions?

   SURVEY: B. Are there any items whose value you question (either in general or for your own teaching)?

   C. Have you used the option to ask additional questions? Problems/Advantages?

   D. Do you encourage free comments on the backs of the cards? Do your students make comments? How have comments been useful to you?

   REPORT: E. When interpreting your report, do you primarily use the statistics, the descriptive terms, or both?

   F. In interpreting your report, do you pay particular attention to the progress ratings on those items which you specified as important or essential objectives?

   G. Which sections, if any, do you find especially useful? Explain.

   H. Which sections, if any, do you find especially difficult to interpret? Explain.

3. Elaboration on question 9 as follows:

   A. Have you ever submitted your evaluation results as input for tenure or salary decisions?

   B. Do you do this voluntarily or because of departmental policy?

   C. How much of the form do you submit?

   D. Do you include explanation of any kind?

   E. Do you feel the report can be useful for <u>both</u> "administrative" and "improvement" purposes?

4. Space was provided on the Interview Form for the interviewer to record responses directly under the questions.

IDEA SURVEY FORM -- STUDENT REACTIONS TO INSTRUCTION AND COURSES

Your thoughtful answers to these questions will provide helpful information to your instructor.

• Describe the frequency of your instructor's teaching procedures, using the following code:

1 — Hardly Ever
2 — Occasionally
3 — Sometimes
4 — Frequently
5 — Almost Always

The Instructor:

1. Promoted teacher-student discussion (as opposed to mere responses to questions).
2. Found ways to help students answer their own questions.
3. Encouraged students to express themselves freely and openly.
4. Seemed enthusiastic about the subject matter.
5. Changed approaches to meet new situations.
6. Gave examinations which stressed unnecessary memorization.
7. Spoke with expressiveness and variety in tone of voice.
8. Demonstrated the importance and significance of the subject matter.
9. Made presentations which were dry and dull.
10. Made it clear how each topic fit into the course.
11. Explained the reasons for criticisms of students' academic performance.
12. Gave examination questions which were unclear.
13. Encouraged student comments even when they turned out to be incorrect or irrelevant.
14. Summarized material in a manner which aided retention.
15. Stimulated students to intellectual effort beyond that required by most courses.
16. Clearly stated the objectives of the course.
17. Explained course material clearly, and explanations were to the point.
18. Related course material to real life situations.
19. Gave examination questions which were unreasonably detailed (picky).
20. Introduced stimulating ideas about the subject.

• On each of the objectives listed below, rate the progress you have made in this course compared with that made in other courses you have taken at this college or university. In this course my progress was:

1 — Low (lowest 10 per cent of courses I have taken here)
2 — Low Average (next 20 per cent of courses)
3 — Average (middle 40 per cent of courses)
4 — High Average (next 20 percent of courses)
5 — High (highest 10 per cent of courses)

Progress on:

21. Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends).
22. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories.
23. Learning to apply course material to improve rational thinking, problem solving and decision making.
24. Developing specific skills, competencies and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course.
25. Learning how professionals in this field go about the process of gaining new knowledge.
26. Developing creative capacities.
27. Developing a sense of personal responsibility (self reliance, self discipline).
28. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.).
29. Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing.
30. Discovering the implications of the course material for understanding myself (interests, talents, values, etc.).

• On the next four questions, compare this course with others you have taken at this institution, using the following code:

1 — Much Less than Most Courses
2 — Less than Most
3 — About Average
4 — More than Most
5 — Much More than Most

The Course:

31. Amount of reading.
32. Amount of work in other (non-reading) assignments.
33. Difficulty of subject matter.
34. Degree to which the course hung together (various topics and class activities were related to each other).

• Describe your attitudes toward and behavior in this course, using the following code:

1 — Definitely False
2 — More False than True
3 — In Between
4 — More True than False
5 — Definitely True

Self-rating:

35. I worked harder on this course than on most courses I have taken.
36. I had a strong desire to take this course.
37. I would like to take another course from this instructor.
38. As a result of taking this course, I have more positive feelings toward this field of study.
39. I have given thoughtful consideration to the questions on this form.

• Describe your status on the following by blackening the appropriate space on the Response Card.

A. To which sex age group do you belong?

1 — Female, under 25
2 — Male, under 25
3 — Female, 25 or over
4 — Male, 25 or over

B. Do you consider yourself to be a full-time or a part-time student?

1 — Full-time
2 — Part-time

C. Counting the present term, for how many terms have you attended this college or university?

1 — 1 term
2 — 2 or 3
3 — 4 or 5
4 — 6 or more

D. What grade do you expect to receive in this course?

1 — A
2 — B
3 — C
4 — D or F
5 — Other

E. What is your classification?

1 — Freshman
2 — Sophomore
3 — Junior or Senior
4 — Graduate
5 — Other

F. For how many courses have you filled out this form during the present term?

1 — This is the first course
2 — 2 or 3 courses
3 — 4 or more courses

G. How well did the questions on this form permit you to describe your impressions of this instructor and course?

1 — Very well
2 — Quite well
3 — Not very well
4 — Poorly

If your instructor has extra questions, answer them in the space designated on the Response Card.

Your comments are invited on how the instructor might improve this course or teaching procedures. Use the back of the Response Card (unless otherwise directed).

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